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Friendship in the Order

Scenario Supplement for Twilight Storm

By Morrie Mullins

Former Living Force Plot Director and Campaign Designer

Former Living Force Plot Director and Campaign Designer Morrie Mullins presents the latest in our monthly series of supplements to the campaign's newest scenarios. In "Friendship in the Order," Master Lanius offers his views on relationships and attachments that Jedi may form -- for good or ill. This supplement ties into the February Living Force scenario, Twilight Storm.

As war rages across the galaxy, the Jedi have been pulled in many directions at once. Some, feeling the disquiet that runs through the order, have taken it upon themselves to collect the knowledge and philosophy of certain Jedi to record for future generations. In addition to interviewing remaining members of the Council, much of the compiling, editing, and refining of information is being done on Almas, well away from the struggles at the galactic center. The faculty of the Academy has been involved in many ways, as have the Padawans, in the gathering and sharing of information.

Master Lanius Qel-Bertuk has been interviewed for this project on a number of occasions. While his views are often controversial, he remains a respected member of the Jedi Order. This transcription contains elements of his thoughts on a topic many Jedi find oddly confusing -- friendship.

A hologram of Master Lanius appears. He has his hands folded beneath his chin, elbows propped up on his desk. He stares off into the distance in what might be a Force trance. Slowly, his eyes come back into focus, and he looks toward the viewer. A voice -- not his -- speaks.

Questioner: Hello, Master Lanius. Thank you for seeing us.

Master Lanius: It's my honor. Thank you for asking me to contribute.

Q: Your reputation is such that even had circumstances not dictated that we come to Almas, we would have spoken with you. We are simply sorry about the... timing of this particular conversation.

[Lanius nods, and for a moment a frown tugs at his mouth.] ML: These are difficult times for everyone. If anything, that makes it more necessary for us to record what we know, as well as what we feel.

Q: You are quite renowned as an advocate of the living Force, are you not? The idea that we should trust our intuition is not always a popular one.

ML: It does depend on who you ask, I suppose. But, yes, I suppose that I do sometimes espouse some atypical views. [He smiles.] If my atypicality has anything to do with my being here, on this wonderful planet with all these wonderful Padawans, then I cannot help but believe that my own intuition has served me unfailingly well.

Q: Indeed. As one who strives to be in constant contact with those around you, and with the galaxy as a whole, this must put a great strain on you. How does one maintain contact without forming harmful attachments?

ML: You choose interesting words. "Harmful" attachments. That presupposes that there is such a thing as a "harmless" attachment, which I'm not sure I agree with.

Q: Please, elaborate.

ML: Gladly. The notion of attachment is one of needing something that is outside of us for completeness. But we learn, as we grow in the Force, that there is nothing of the material world that we "need," no single person without whom we could not exist, were they to leave our lives unexpectedly. [He closes his eyes for a moment and nods to himself, then reopens his eyes.] It is a challenge. For all of us. But attachments weaken our resolve to do what is best for all living beings and cause us to think more of our individual selves.

Q: Is the individual self not important, then?

ML: It is. We are all important, because we are all part of the Force. I heard something Mother Dariana said recently that struck a chord. She told a story of her childhood and of killing another creature with the Force because she was so attached to the idea of living.

Q: But self-preservation is natural, and the will of the Force, is it not?

ML: Life and death are both the will of the Force. Sometimes, self-preservation is right. Other times, the death of one may better serve the many.

Q: Let's shift the topic a bit, back toward attachment. You know many Jedi. Do you consider any of them to be your friends? [There is a long pause as Master Lanius considers the answer. He stares straight ahead, a half-smile on his face, as he thinks.] ML: Every Jedi -- every Master, every Knight, and every Padawan -- is my friend. There are very few beings who embrace the light side of the Force -- or who, at the very least, abjure the dark -- who I would not call "friend." But the question you ask goes beyond that, and gets at a core issue in our approach to how we may serve the galaxy. Because if we call beings "friend," then do we not imply that we have some attachment to them, that we love them and value their lives? [He leans forward, hands clasped.] And, if this is the case, is this not a weakness that can then be exploited? Are we not failing to serve the will of the Force as best we can?

Q: They are your questions, not ours.

ML: I've spent a lot of time thinking about these things. I've spoken about them with individuals who came to me from outside the order, trying to explain the Jedi Code to them. It's very difficult to help someone who has not attempted to live the Code understand what it means. We are not emotionless creatures. We feel. Being a Jedi does not rob us of the emotions with which we were born. We are simply no longer dominated by them.

Yes. I love my friends. The Jedi are my friends. Many non-Jedi are my friends. I love all of them equally, or as equally as a flawed being is able to do so. "Twilight Storm" Summary Master Lanius needs an old friend, a Twi'lek Jedi, brought back to Almas. Given the state of the galaxy, standard means of communication are not working between Almas and Ryloth, and he needs volunteers to make the journey.

Q: Yet there is no attachment, with this love?

ML: If there is, then it becomes an attachment to all living beings, to all life. The troublesome sort of attachment, which we teach our Padawans to avoid, is the attachment to one person, one thing, at the expense of any other.

Q: Even the self?

ML: There was a story I heard once, about a man who wanted to find the Force. He believed he could reach a place on a faraway planet, or maybe a moon, where he would find a swirling white cloud made of pure Force energy. He traveled the galaxy from one side to the other in search of this swirling white cloud. He left his life behind, he left his family behind, and he left his children behind. All of his friends, all of his valuables, everything that had ever meant anything to him. He traveled by freighter, doing manual labor as he hopped from one planet to the next. He would get off, ask questions, describe the cloud, and then find a new freighter. He never held onto the disappointment of his failures, but they became many. I couldn't even guess how many planets he visited, how many languages he must have spoken, how many times he must have pushed himself to go on and try just one more world, because there he might find the Force.

Q: And did he? Is there such a cloud?

ML: I don't know if the cloud exists. But I know that he never found it, and that he died old and disappointed. Do you know why he never found it?

Q: You speak as though we were Padawans.

ML: No, I speak as though you were Jedi. Why did he never find it?

Q: Because it was inside him all the time.

[Lanius cocks his head and chuckles.] ML: Whatever the Force is, wherever it comes from, I can guarantee you that it is not a swirling white cloud inside of any single individual.

Q: But the Force is in all of us.

ML: Correct. But that's not the reason why he didn't find it.

Q: Then why?

ML: Because, for all of his leave-takings, for all the things he removed from his life, he retained one attachment, one thing that he valued above all others. Ironically, his attachment was to the Force itself, and for it, he gave up what could have been a productive life to chase a dream across a galaxy.

[He leans forward.] Friendship in the Jedi Order is one aspect of our philosophy. We are all part of the Force. As Master Yoda says, it surrounds us and penetrates us. All of us. The friendships that we have should be the same. So, no: Friendship is not forbidden. It is part of who and what we are. We work together. At times, we may fight together. Sometimes, we even die together. But we do not die to save another Jedi. We die - - if we must - - knowing that all life is sacrosanct. We are all, every one of us, vital to the will of the Force.